

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 254 093

FL 014 891

TITLE English Teaching Profile: Yemen Arab Republic.
INSTITUTION British Council, London (England). English Language and Literature Div.
PUB DATE Jun 84
NOTE 8p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Information Analyses (070)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Creative Writing; Educational Administration; Educational Planning; *Elementary Secondary Education; *English (Second Language); *English Instruction; Foreign Countries; *Higher Education; Industry; Information Sources; Instructional Materials; International Cooperation; *Language Role; Language Teachers; National Surveys; Research Projects; Teacher Education; Technical Assistance
IDENTIFIERS *Yemen

ABSTRACT

A description of the role and status of the English language in the Yemen Arab Republic begins with a general statement concerning the distribution of English speakers and the use of English language materials. Subsequent sections outline: (1) the use and status of English within the educational system at all levels, including teacher education; (2) the availability of English language materials and resources; (3) the structure of educational administration relating to English instruction; (4) development and planning efforts; (5) English outside the educational system; (6) British, American, and other agency support for English teaching; (7) commercial opportunities relating to the English language; (8) creative writing in English; (9) current research; and (10) other sources of information about the situation. A concluding statement notes that the importance of English is recognized nationally, although the educational system is conservative and concerned with immediate tasks, and a British curriculum development project is receiving strong support from Yemeni authorities. (MSE)

 * Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
 * from the original document. *

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

British Council

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

* This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve
reproduction quality.

* Points of view or opinions stated in this docu-
ment do not necessarily represent official NIE
position or policy.

ENGLISH TEACHING PROFILE

Country: Yemen Arab Republic

Date: June 1984

1. ROLE AND STATUS OF ENGLISH

English is the second language of the country, though competence in it is not widespread. Until 1962 Yemen was isolated. In the last twenty years education has expanded considerably, but for effective communication it is still necessary to know Arabic.

The Colony of Aden had English-medium schools and colleges. Many graduates of these institutions are in Yemen and have a large influence in commercial, professional and academic circles. Yemenis who have returned from overseas - in particular Ethiopia and East Africa - are also usually competent in English.

Moreover English is the principal language of communication with non-Eastern bloc foreigners, especially the large number of international "experts" provided by bilateral and multilateral agreements.

At the University of Sana'a, the country's only university, English is a required language.

English books are not widely read for pleasure, but rather for limited professional purposes. A few expatriate Yemenis write books and articles in English. Those who have written theses abroad have sometimes had them published in English.

© The British Council, London 1983

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be produced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the permission of the British Council, 10 Spring Gardens, London SW1A 2BN, United Kingdom.

ED254093

FL014 891

2. ENGLISH WITHIN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Schools

English is introduced in the first year of preparatory school (Year Seven) and continues through the three years of preparatory and the three years of secondary education.

It is, with Arabic and Science, a main subject taught at all levels for five 45-minute periods per week. It is considered important because, first, a growing number of school leavers go on to Sana'a University to specialise in education, science, commerce, etc; and second, an increasing number of Yemenis go abroad to English speaking countries (principally the US) for further study in a variety of disciplines.

In 1979 the Ministry of Education decided to improve the general standard of English language ability in the schools, and a British Council consultant was invited to visit the country. It was found that new textbooks were required, and the British Council appointed two specialists to write them. They arrived in Yemen in September 1979. The new textbooks, entitled English for Yemen, have now been written and cover the six years of the educational system during which English is taught.

Most of the English language teachers in the schools are Egyptian. There is an in-service teacher training programme aimed at improving their teaching capability and methods.

The standard of English after six years is often bad - "false beginner level". Students hoping to go abroad usually have to supplement their school English with up to two years of full-time intensive study.

The University of Sana'a

Since its inauguration in 1970 there has been a growing awareness in the University of the need for English language teaching, especially in the Faculty of Science. Until 1982 this was provided by the English Department, which is primarily concerned with teaching literature. In 1983, however, the University established a Language Centre to cater for the language needs of the whole University. A credit system was introduced, all students now needing credits in both Arabic and English. The British Council has recruited eight specialists for the Centre, four of them provided by the Key English Language Teaching Scheme (KELT) funded by the ODA.

The Faculty of Education is responsible for training Yemeni teachers of English for the schools, but this was not a high priority until recently. Since the formation of the Language Centre, however, it has been possible to give much greater importance to the training of English teachers. Many more trained Yemenis should enter the school system as teachers of English in the next few years.

3. TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

The Schools

Over 90% of English language teachers are expatriate Egyptians. They are seconded for a period of four years and teach in both the preparatory and secondary systems. They tend to be hardworking but very traditional in their methods and methodology. Thus there is a need for the British

Council/Ministry of Education in-service teacher training programme. This programme also orientates teachers to the curriculum development inherent in the English for Yemen textbooks.

The University

The teachers at the University are mainly British, Egyptian and Indian. However, the number of trained Yemeni teachers emerging from the University will increase in the next few years and supplement the expatriate Egyptians in the school system.

4. MATERIALS SUPPORT

Textbooks

The series of textbooks called English for Yemen, completed in 1984, was devised for use throughout the school system, preparatory and secondary. The new materials consist of a coursebook, workbook and Teachers' Notes for each year, with wallcharts and flash cards. In the last two years of secondary school the students are divided into Scientific and Literary streams. The books for these levels have been written specifically for these streams.

TV films

The British Council assists in the making of English language teaching television films for Yemeni TV. A film is shown every week during peak hours.

In-service training packs

A series of training packs has been devised for the regular in-service teacher training sessions, using overhead projectors and video support. The teacher trainers regularly use this material.

At present the University Language Centre uses commercially produced textbooks for teaching students from the various faculties. However, it plans to design more specifically subject-related materials.

5. EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION IN RELATION TO ENGLISH TEACHING

The Ministry of Education is in the capital, Sana'a. The principal departments for English in the schools are:-

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Deputy Minister | - for main policy discussions and decisions |
| Curriculum Department | - materials and examinations |
| Inspectorate | - in charge of a team of (mainly Egyptian) Inspectors who visit classes and report on education matters |
| Teacher Training Department | a Head Teacher Trainer (KELT) and two assistant teacher trainers are attached to this department. They supervise and coordinate the in-service teacher training programme |

Purchasing Department - responsible for the ordering of and payment for
and Book Store books. This will be less important in future,
as the English in Yemen series is printed in
Yemen.

Provincial Education Office

Yemen has eleven provinces. They all have a Provincial Education Office responsible to the central Ministry in Sana'a.

These Provincial Education Offices oversee all aspects of education. Each of them has an English Language Inspector or Inspectors to cover the schools in its province, inspecting classes and making reports. All the reports go ultimately to the central Ministry in Sana'a.

The University

The University is autonomous. All major policy decisions must go through the Senate, the Chairman of which is the Minister of Education.

The Language Centre, which teaches in-service English to the various faculties, is not attached to any one faculty. For pre-service teacher training, however, it works with the Faculty of Education, which has the ultimate responsibility for teacher training.

6. DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING OF THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

The Schools

The new English for Yemen textbooks represent an important development in English language teaching in Yemen. They are "Yemeni" in content, containing material related to the English the students will need after they leave school; e.g. study skills, technical training courses, when going abroad or working in a commercial office.

The in-service teacher training programme aims to improve the standard of teaching with these textbooks as much as is possible. Now that they are in the schools this has become the most important activity. It will continue in its present form until the end of 1986.

Future needs will be reviewed in due course.

The University

The pre-service teacher training programme is geared to producing more Yemeni teachers for the schools. It is expected that they will be better trained and less traditional in approach than the expatriate Egyptian teachers. The British Council is working to strengthen the links between the school system and the University, so that the new Yemeni teachers will be conversant with the aims, objectives and methods of the English for Yemen series.

Service English at the Language Centre

It is hoped that the British teaching staff at the Language Centre will soon have more time to devise new materials specific to the needs of the faculties whose students they teach. At present most teach an average of fourteen hours a week.

7. ENGLISH OUTSIDE THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Until 1962 there was little formal education in Yemen. Most Yemenis neither speak nor understand English. But, in the last decade, thousands who lived and were educated outside the Yemen Arab Republic have returned from the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (formerly Aden and the hinterland), Ethiopia, East Africa and even Britain. Their English is usually good.

In addition to the educational system English is taught in some government institutions:-

Yemen Airways has a training centre and is currently (April 1984) recruiting English language teachers from Britain.

The National Institute for Public Administration, with branches in Sana'a, Hodeida and Ta'izz, holds English classes for government servants.

The Defence Language Institute teaches English (among other languages) to members of the armed forces.

The Ministry of Electricity is recruiting, through the British Council, two teachers of English for the Ras Katenib power station.

There is also one private language school.

8. BRITISH SUPPORT FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

The Schools

Now that the new textbooks have been written the two writers who worked on the project are leaving. The British Council/KELT team during 1984-86 will be:-

Head, Teacher Training
Assistant Teacher Trainer North
Assistant Teacher Trainer South
Media Producer.

They will be responsible for the in-service programme, training the Egyptian teachers in the methods used by the English for Yemen series. The Media Producer will continue making a series of educational TV films for the national network.

The University

The British Council-recruited team at the University Language Centre in 1984-85 will consist of five or six KELT officers:-

Head, English Language Unit
Two specialists in curriculum design
One specialist in testing
One or two teacher trainers and
Five study skills specialists.

They will be concerned with English for Specific Purposes (ESP) for students in the various faculties, and with training Yemeni teachers of English.

British Council Teaching Centre

The British Council runs a Direct Teaching of English Operation. At present there are 300 students; about 100 of them are funded by the ODA, 120 are sponsored by their Ministries, and the rest are privately funded. The Centre is staffed by a British Council-recruited Director, a Senior Teacher, nine teachers on local full-time contracts and up to nine hourly-paid teachers. There are seven levels, from Beginner to Advanced.

British Council Library

The Library has a stock of about 9,000 books and is the only lending library in the country. It has a large section of simplified and graded readers to assist English learning; sections on the Arab world and Islam; novels; and a scattered collection of books about Britain.

It has 740 members, of whom 51% are Yemeni and 18% British. The others come from a wide range of nationalities - European, Asian, Eastern bloc and American.

9. AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

The Yemen American Language Institute (YALI) works from the United States Information Service headquarters. It has about 350 students, largely made up of US-funded candidates for training programmes in the United States. They include Fulbright scholars, and also one preparing for a US aid programme for the Ministry of Agriculture and another for the Ministry of Education (at the Eastern Michigan University). Vacant places are taken up by fee-paying students.

The staff of YALI are mostly Peace Corps volunteers. The Peace Corps also provides teachers of English for the National Institute of Public Administration.

Since 1981 YALI and the British Council, in collaboration, have organised an annual two-day national conference of English Language Teaching in the Yemen. The last, in March 1984, was opened by the Deputy Minister of Education and attended by people involved in English language teaching from all over the Yemen. They included the two KELTs at the University of Aden.

10. OTHER AGENCY SUPPORT

Foreign governments and the United Nations use the existing provision as described above.

11. COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

There is one English language bookshop in Sana'a, though some other stalls and shops stock books in English, and also BBC English teaching materials.

A few ex-Adenis seek to take British examinations. There is one private language school.

Commercial opportunities, in short, are limited.

12. CREATIVE WRITING

The Yemen Airways Inflight monthly magazine Yemenia publishes articles in English. There are no writers' associations or societies.

13. CURRENT RESEARCH

Fourth year literature students at the University often write dissertations on English literature topics. Any postgraduate research is done overseas.

Two junior staff from the Department of English have scholarships for training in Britain, given under the FCO Special Award Scheme (SAS). In past years the British Council assisted that Department by providing visiting lecturers, but has not done so since the establishment of the Language Centre. The University funded the two-year visit of Professor F T Prince, former Professor of English at the University of Southampton, distinguished poet and critic. He made a considerable impact on staff and students.

Four fourth-year students went on a summer course in 1983, funded by the ODA and managed by the British Council. There have been similar groups each year since 1978. They are expected to be future teachers of English.

14. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

The Ministry of Education publishes statistics each year. Apart from these, reliable and precise information is hard to come by. It is impossible, for instance, to learn from the Ministry of Education just how many schools there are in the country.

15. GENERAL STATEMENT

The importance of learning English is recognised nationally. The educational system, as in most developing countries, is conservative, traditional and concerned with immediate tasks. The ODA/British Council curriculum development project 1979-86, which produced English for Yemen and other materials, is receiving strong support from the Yemeni authorities.

In the last decade Yemen has become part of the international community. The general level of English among educated people has improved both quantitatively and qualitatively. There is no reason why this should not continue.